reservation in Central Educational Institutions;

(b) whether the Commission has submitted any report to Government; and

(c) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN): (a) National Knowledge Commission issued the following statement on reservation in Central Educational Institutions, through a press release, at Bangalore on 8th May, 2006:—

"The National Knowledge Commission firmly believes that a knowledge society must be a socially inclusive society, and this social inclusion must be reflected in the educational institutions, Historically we have used the instrument of reservations to achieve this goal. For central institutions this reservation is currently at 22.5% for SCs/STs. This is a historic opportunity to craft more effective policies to make educational institutions more socially inclusive. But how we go about doing this in a way that is compatible with the goals of a knowledge society is a difficult task and requires more social debate and careful thought. On the issue of proposed new measures, there is a difference of opinion within the Commission. Six of the eight Members feel that until such time as we have explored new and more effective avenues of affirmative action, the *status quo* should be maintained and reservations should not be extended as proposed. Two Members disagree with the above view: Dr. Jayati Ghosh supports the extension of reservations, and Dr. P.M. Bhargava supports the extension of reservations, subject to certain conditions."

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

Package for farmers in Andhra Pradesh

2187. SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Central Government have agreed on Rs. 15,000 crore as special package for the 'distressed farmers' in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) in what manner the farmers would get benefits from this financial assistance;

(d) to what extent it would help to improve the plight of distress farmers in Andhra Pradesh; and

(e) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN): (a) and (b) No, Sir.

(c) to (e) However, in this context it is learnt that the Ministry of Agriculture, GoI is working out the rehabilitation package for the identified districts of Andhra Pradesh, on the lines of the package that has been announced for the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra.

Agrarian crisis in Kerala

2188. SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN:
SHRI P.R. RAJAN:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Kerala submitted scheme/package to the Planning Commission during 2006 for relief to the people of four districts of Kerala that are badly hit by agrarian crisis;

(b) if so, the present status of the above package/scheme;

(c) if so, whether above representation also sought to include Idukki and Kasargod districts in the first phase of NREGP and Backward districts grant fund; and

(d) if so, the action taken on the above?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) In this context, it is learnt that the Ministry of Agriculture, GoI is working out the rehabilitation package for the idenified districts of Kerala, on the lines of the package that has been announced for the Vidharba region of Maharashtra.

(c) and (d) For implementation of National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (NREGP), 200 districts have been identified throughout the country in the first phase and the programme has been launched on 02.02.2006. Districts of Wayanad and Palakkad of Kerala have already been included in this list. In the representation Kerala Govt. have sought to include Idukki and Kasargod alongwith the districts of Wayanad and Palakkad which have already been chosen in the first phase. Since the selection of districts in the first phase is already over, inclusion of any other district can only be considered as and when the programme is extended in future.